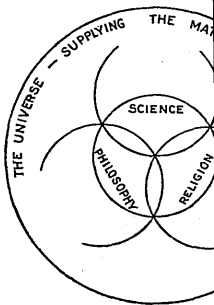


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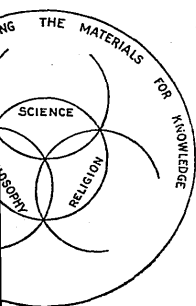
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RELIGION WISDOM



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THE RELIGION OF WISDOM

KNOWING BY BECOMING
BECOMING BY KNOWING

BY
HENRY CLAYTON THOMPSON

*"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom;
Yea, with all thy getting, get understanding.
Exalt her, and she will promote thee:
She will bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her.
She will give to thy head a chaplet of grace;
A crown of beauty will she deliver to thee.
Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go;
Keep her; for she is thy life."*

Proverbs 4:7-9, 18.

*Gavin E.
Ernest S. Bunch*

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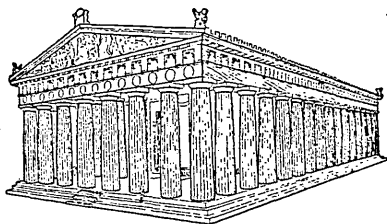
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DEDICATED TO THE COMING RACE

THE TEMPLE OF WISDOM

INTELLIGENT COOPERATION
IN THE CREATIVE PLAN



THIS STAIRWAY IS MOUNTED BY
THOSE WHO ACQUIRE NOBLE,
GOD LIKE CHARACTER THROUGH
COMPREHENSION OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP
TO THE WHOLE, AND
CONFORMITY THEREWITH BY
ASSUMING PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

PLATFORM OF AT-ONE-MENT WITH THE PURPOSE
AND METHOD OF THE INVOLUTIONARY
EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

EQUILIBRIUM

LOVE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

OBEDIENCE TO LAW

DEVOTION TO TRUTH



THIS STAIRWAY IS MOUNTED BY
THOSE WHO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN
GOOD AND EVIL, RIGHT AND WRONG,
TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD, AND
CHOOSE TO CULTIVATE REVERENCE,
VIRTUE, HONOR, KINDNESS, PATIENCE

PLATFORM OF SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION

SPIRITUAL SELF-DISCIPLINE

SPIRITUAL CHOICE

SPIRITUAL APPREHENSION OR REVERENCE



SELF-CENTERED INDIVIDUALISM ASCENT TO WISDOM

ON THIS PLATFORM STAND THE
CREATURES WHICH REFLECT BUT
DO NOT ASPIRE

PLATFORM OF INTELLECTUAL COMPREHENSION

UNDERSTANDING CREATURES

THINKING CREATURES



ASCENT TO MORALITY

UNMORALITY

ON THIS PLATFORM STAND THE
CREATURES WHICH PERCEIVE BUT
DO NOT REFLECT

PLATFORM OF
INTELLECTUAL APPREHENSION

SEEING CREATURES

HEARING CREATURES

MOBILE CREATURES



IGNORANCE

ASCENT TO KNOWLEDGE

ON THIS PLATFORM STAND THE
CREATURES OF LOW INTELLIGENCE
WHICH DO NOT PERCEIVE

PLATFORM OF PHYSICAL SENSATION

TASTING CREATURES

SMELLING CREATURES

FEELING CREATURES



ASCENT TO SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IMMOBILITY



INSENSIBILITY

ASCENT TO CONSCIOUSNESS

THE ASCENT OF MAN—THE RESULT OF DETERMINISM

THE ASCENT OF MAN— THE RESULT OF DETERMINISM

Creation is not finished. The creative process consists in the continuous organisation, transmutation, dissolution, and reorganisation of four universal cosmic elements,—matter, energy, life, and intelligence. Starting from the plane of the combinations of matter and energy, the diagram shows the successive steps of the ascent of man, caused by the gradual involution of life and intelligence. Involution is an invisible process which accounts for evolution in the visible forms. Involution limits evolution; evolution fulfils involution.

Organisation is the process of involution; transmutation is the process of evolution; dissolution is the process of liberation of the cosmic elements from form and function, preparatory to their reorganisation in different combinations in new forms. Reproduction is the method used to secure continuity of the selected species. The selected types of life are fully established, and no new variations are now being formed. Firmly based upon the preceding accomplishments, the plane of creative activity has been raised to the mental and moral realms, and nature's finer forces are now engaged in the chemistry of character-building. Time has no significance in this eternal process.

Man in his normal physical, mental, moral, and spiritual endowment is the highest product of nature, the explanatory terminal of the series of animal species, the type-phenomenon of the ultimate expression of universal powers and values, the microcosm of the macrocosm, and the crude beginning of individualised intelligence, will, morality, and love, thus gradually becoming a faint replica of Divine character.

Determinism, or the Will that energises the universal involutionary-evolutionary creative process, is manifest in these successive interdependent accomplishments which constitute the

externalisation of the creative purpose. The ascent of man, demonstrating the individualising potentialities of the creative energy, has thus become the interpretative revelation of the creative plan, and the panoramic unfoldment of the meaning of earth life, with indications of greater accomplishments.

There is a culmination of effort of nature's forces in the life history of every plant, animal, and human being. There is a limit to the development of each species under the terms of natural selection. Further improvement depends upon human co-operation. Human co-operation depends upon the knowledge and wisdom attained by individuals through their own personal efforts in supplementing the other forces of nature. Thus, responsibility for success or failure is transferred to humanity, and earth conditions reflect their status.

Determinism manifests in three distinct ways, (1) compulsion, (2) constraint, (3) restraint. All philosophies and religions have attempted comprehension of this law governing spiritual gravitation. The master-key is personal responsibility. Determinism forces the creatures to the level of intellectual comprehension. Determinism exercises constraining influence upon the intelligent individual until he or she deliberately and understandingly accepts or refuses personal responsibility. Determinism restrains from further ascent those who refuse, or neglect, to assume personal responsibility. Thus, soul quality becomes a definite factor in the evolutionary process, governing progress and deciding destiny.

After the platform of intellectual comprehension is attained, the further ascent of man is by self-determined stages, each one dependent upon higher refinement of character. The specific quality of soul decides station and place; this is the law of spiritual gravitation. "Heaven" is harmonious association with one's own kind at any stage, and this causes many delays. The spiritual planes interpenetrate. Without leaving the physical body, and while outward appearances are similar, it is possible to ascend to higher planes of wisdom and experience than can be recognised by the quality of soul common to the earth creatures.

Distinctions, which must be observed on the earth plane, alter their significances as we ascend, such as,—intelligence

and ignorance, truth and error, religion and sin, good and evil, morality and immorality, masculine and feminine, selfishness and altruism, disease and health, suffering and happiness, sorrow and joy. The earth plane of experience is especially valuable in accentuating the irreconcilable nature of the extremes; but, on ascending planes, conditions of ignorance, error, sin, evil, wrong, immorality, sex as now expressed, selfishness, disease, suffering, and sorrow are gradually left behind and forgotten. It is true those who ascend recognise that they are animated and inspired by One Universal Spirit; but it is not true that this means loss of individuality, or merging of identity.

Thus, after many births, those selected by the process, through voluntary compliance with nature's constructive principles, attain the level of self-realisation which is the basis for at-one-ment, first individual and then universal. Here they purposefully seek the necessary WISDOM for comprehension of, and obedience to, the spiritual laws governing the function of self-conscious, intelligent, and powerful co-operation in the original plan of the Creator. This completes the object of earth embodiment, and prepares the individual for the activities of other spheres.

*A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod,—
Some call it evolution,
And others call it God.*

W. H. Carruth.

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THE RELIGION OF WISDOM

Nature, which is the time-vesture of God, and reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish. Thomas Carlyle.

Religion or worship is the attitude of those who see that, against all appearance, the nature of things works for truth and right forever. Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Clearly, unless a sense or endowment of human nature, however in itself real and beneficent, has some signal representative among mankind, it tends to be pressed upon by other senses and endowments, to suffer from its own want of energy, and to be more and more pushed out of sight. Every one knows how those who want to cultivate any sense or endowment in themselves, must be habitually conversant with the works of people who have been eminent for that sense, must study them, catch inspiration from them; only in this way, indeed, can progress be made. And as long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense for righteousness most glowing and strongest. As well imagine a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek art, or a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it by the help of the Bible! And this sense, in the satisfying of which we come naturally to the Bible, is a sense which the generality of men have far more decidedly than they have the sense for art or for science; at any rate, whether we have it decidedly or no, it is the sense which has to do with three fourths of human life.

LITERATURE AND DOGMA, Matthew Arnold.

But the soul of Harold lifted her own out of the Valley of the Shadow up to the Heavenly Hill. Thus from Harold might Edith be said to have taken her very soul. And with the soul, and through the soul, woke the mind from the mists of childhood.

HAROLD, Edward Bulwer Lytton.

Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity, yea, every good path, when wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul. Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee.

PROVERBS 2:9-11.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand: and in her left hand riches and honour.

PROVERBS 3:13-16.

THE RELIGION OF WISDOM

DEFINITION No. 1:

Religion is an attitude of soul and quality of life.

DEFINITION No. 2:

Religion is that attitude of soul and quality of life which assumes personal responsibility.

DEFINITION No. 3:

Religion is that attitude of soul and quality of life which assumes personal responsibility for the acquirement of wisdom.

DEFINITION No. 4:

Religion is that attitude of soul and quality of life which assumes personal responsibility for the acquirement of wisdom :

WISDOM : { Devotion to truth
Obedience to law
Love of righteousness

DEFINITION No. 5:

Religion is that attitude of soul and quality of life which assumes personal responsibility for the acquirement of wisdom:

WISDOM:	Devotion to truth (PURPOSE)	(Truth is the revelation of the creative purpose which is manifested in the opportunity for continuous development offered to mankind through the established universal process of involution and evolution.)
	Obedience to law (PLAN)	(Law is the undeviating, unchangeable nature of the method of progress and the conditions of attainment.)
	Love of righteousness (POWER)	(Righteousness is that noble conduct which discharges personal responsibility by co-operating with the constructive principles of nature, establishing social and economic justice, promoting universal peace, prosperity, and happiness.)

THE RELIGION OF WISDOM

ARTICLES UNDER DEFINITION No. 5:

1. This definition distinguishes religion from mythology, superstition, imagination, belief, error, irreligion, sophistry, and all other underdevelopments, substitutions, counterfeits, disguises, and misrepresentations.

2. The conditions which make religion possible, necessary, and desirable to an intelligent individual are always and everywhere present. Religion does not depend upon an historic past nor an uncertain future.

3. Beliefs sustain the same relation to religion that theories do to science; they may be true but they are not yet demonstrated. False beliefs, tenaciously upheld, considered bulwarks of civilisation and religion, are the greatest hindrance to the revelation of the creative purpose. A false creed blinds the eyes and obscures the truth.

4. Credulity is belief in a statement without evidence or proof of its validity. Faith is fidelity to truth, apprehended by intuition, but which transcends the range of the physical senses.

5. Repentance, prayer, and faith have no effect upon the operation of natural law, but they do powerfully affect for good the individual adjustment thereto.

6. All truth is sacred, no matter how, when, or by whom discovered.

7. Truth does not need the artificial support of authority. No authority can make truth any more true, nor alter the false and injurious nature of error and superstition.

8. The recognition of truth is equivalent to the recognition of personal responsibility, since it automatically binds the individual to obedience. Truth once perceived cannot thereafter be ignored without incurring the penalties of soul degradation and loss of opportunity for continuous development. Perception of truth is the avenue of approach to Reality: obedience to law is the walking therein; wisdom is attained by taking the journey.

9. Sacred writings are those which assist men to become wise and holy. The inspiration that first caused sacred writings cannot now be determined; but the inspiration that sacred writings cause may be estimated in personal experience. Mere dogmas, which cannot be tested nor demonstrated, are useless. Theories, beliefs, doctrines, and ceremonies which are useless are not sacred.

10. The test of the value of any so-called "revelation" is an ever-present one. Does it indeed reveal Reality? Any writer or speaker who reveals Reality confers a benefit upon the human race. Any writer or speaker who obscures Reality has delayed the great work of enlightenment. Books are subordinate to Reality; never Reality to books.

11. Reality is the nature, purpose, plan, method, materials, and activity of that Intelligence which is the governing power of the universe. The revelation of Reality depends upon man's perception of truth. Man's science, philosophy, and religion are but dim reflections of the truth and imperfect representations of limited portions of Reality. Essential truth is to-day the same in principle that it was two thousand, six thousand, and sixty thousand years ago. The most authentic and trustworthy revelation of the creative purpose is that which is written in human

nature with its potentialities and possibilities of extension into divine or God-like character.

12. That Determinism which the successive accomplishments of the involutionary-evolutionary process manifest is herein called the creative purpose. The continuation of the process through the many interdependent planes of life reveals the existence of a plan. The character and successive stages of the accomplishments reveal the method of progress. The history of man's successes and failures in civilisation, science, philosophy, and religion reveals the conditions of attainment. When men acquire the wisdom to perceive the method of progress and consent to the conditions of attainment, they will become obedient to law and cheerfully co-operate with the creative purpose. Men are responsible for success or failure and decide the rate of progress.

13. The Creator is to be known through the power and intelligence displayed in the actual, current, and perpetual process of creation. The present stage of creation is marked by the unfoldment of the capacities inherent in the intellectual, moral, and spiritual endowment of man. The highest metaphysical concept has the most powerful effect upon human advancement. Men instinctively ascribe to their Creator those attributes which appear to them to be good, wise, and powerful. Hence, the concept of "God" improves with the growth of the race. And hence again, the growth of the race in intelligence compels revision of our ideas of God.

14. Like is known by like. The God-like know God. There is one law of transmutation governing spiritual comprehension, namely,—To cease the gratification of the

physical senses, and acquire the use of the spiritual senses through character transformation. There is no other way to ascend to a higher plane of experience but through continuous transmutation of the senses, caused by aspirations for a purer quality of life. Become that you may know; know that you may become.

15. The distance between us and God is not physical, but mental and spiritual. Only through refinement of the spiritual sight, or by "the eye of the soul," may we intelligently hope to see God. This is not a problem in optics, nor is it dependent upon translation to another sphere or place, but it is a thorough, absolute test of soul quality, here and elsewhere, now and hereafter.

16. The senses of mankind are but embryonic, whether they be once-born or twice-born. This earth is the lowest plane of normal human life. Extension of consciousness depends upon increased power of the mental, moral, and spiritual senses. The development of the senses depends upon the quality, intelligence, will, and purpose of the soul or individual entity. Know by becoming; become by knowing.

17. The creative purpose is involved in man's endowment of faculties, capacities, and powers, and is evolved through their natural, normal development to the fullest self-realisation possible in each embodiment. Without effort is no achievement made. It is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between nature's evolutionary impulse and individual initiative; the two blend. Nature's impulse is commensurate with the degree of individual co-operation secured.

18. The individual entity, intelligent ego, or living soul, functions in three ways:

1. Mind is man's intellectual capacity,
2. Will is man's executive capacity,
3. Spirit is man's aspiring capacity.

Though crude and inadequate, these three functions are capable of illimitable extension and power. Man has no choice but to use the equipment of his natural endowment, and he may greatly improve it, and also know that in so doing he is preparing that receptive condition which invites additional involution of nature's higher powers.

19. A Master selects the proper plane of attention and concentrates his powers to accomplish his desired purpose. Intelligent recognition and conscientious assuming of personal responsibility gradually transmutes spasmodic thought, will, and desire into definite constructive purpose, plan, and power, whereby man may realise all that God, or nature, intended him to become.

20. Devotion to the purpose of nature as expressed in man's endowment with its inherent potentialities, combined with obedience to nature's plan of development, invariably produces spiritual power. Intelligent cultivation of physical, intellectual, or artistic power may assist to comprehension of the rigorous and exact requirements for the superior development of spiritual power.

21. Spiritual power is not derived from material sources, is not merely intellectual or moral. Spiritual power cannot be manufactured, and its counterfeits are easily detected. "Desirest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not." Spiritual power cannot be attained if solely desired and directly sought. Spiritual power cannot be used in competitive struggles for the world's prizes. Spiritual power

cannot be exhibited. Spiritual power is not a topic for debate; it is too sacred. Spiritual power is derived from many sources, fused by the experience of conscious union with Divine, or truly God-like, purposes, and characterised by inspiration for labor and by aspiration for refinement. The process is secret because it is too fine, delicate, and sacred to be discerned by any other than the one individual who is thoroughly occupied in making his own at-onement. The essence of spiritual power is distilled through the sustained harmony of devotion to truth, obedience to law, and love of righteousness.

22. Religion consists in purity of life cherished in the heart, and not in speculations, beliefs, theories, and doctrines advocated in public, nor in penances and austerities practised upon the body. Sophistry is a fog which obscures the beauty of truth, and self-denial is negative and non-productive; while purity of life is the accomplishing of the purpose of the Creator.

23. Personal activity is either constructive or diffusive to religion. Right conduct will produce correct thinking. Correct thinking will produce right conduct. Time will surely reveal whether truth or insincerity ruled the individual in his thought and conduct. The wisdom of religion gradually becomes apparent.

24. Love of righteousness will abolish all insincerity and pretense. Obedience to law will establish confidence in nature's infallibility. Devotion to truth will destroy any counterfeit or substitute for correct thought and right conduct. The religion of wisdom gradually becomes supreme authority because its standard is Reality and its creed is The Truth.

25. Continuous development requires that the secret creed of the individual should be daily rectified to correspond with nature's progressive revelation, and immediately translated into purer quality of conduct to correspond with nature's conditions of attainment. Devotion to truth will cheerfully sacrifice outworn creeds. Reality is the constant criterion of an expanding creed. A change of scene is a proof of progress. Our views alter as we approach Reality. Our lives alter as we approach Divinity.

26. The specific quality of life contains its own rewards and penalties. The thoughts entertained, the considerations weighed, and the decisions formed in secret, have the most profound effect upon human character and destiny. The law of spiritual gravitation cannot be argued out of existence and operation, nor its impartial and impersonal judgments avoided by pretense and profession. Personality has no effect upon Law. As a man liveth in his heart, that he is; and he will be rewarded or penalised by the natural and inevitable results of his thoughts and his deeds. This is the Law of Karma, also apprehended as the Law of Sowing and Reaping. Religion is based upon the infallibility and unchangeableness of Law fully as much as Science is. The wise love the immutability of Law, and the evil-minded instinctively fear it.

27. He that thinketh, loveth, and liveth either a truth or a lie shall surely know its nature and its end when the natural, logical, and unavoidable culmination of his thinking, loving, and living reaches the climax known as "The Day of Judgment." Every decision, pursuit, and experience registers cumulative effects until the quality of soul is fully established and the outward revelation is complete in The Judgment Day, and then the individual realises

what manner of man he is, as established by his own incontrovertible record, or "book of life." The books are opened in "the last day," on each plane of experience.

28. Inability to learn from principle and their insatiable demand for personal experience through physical sensations is one explanation for the delayed progress of the human race. "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil" is the way of personal experience. "The tree of life" is the way of wisdom; that is,—perceiving the principle involved and therefore rejecting the destructive course and choosing the constructive course at every parting of the ways. The malignant nature of evil and its pernicious effects are apparent to the wise from observation, without personal experience. Those who experiment with evil through desire to experience all its sensations and to discover all its effects, cannot know the radically different results derived from resisting evil and overcoming temptation. Love of righteousness leads by sure ways to life eternal.

29. Freedom from all forms of sensual and selfish desire, devotion to truth, obedience to law, and love of righteousness constitute redemption from evil and establish the Kingdom of God. These are the elements of personal religion. This condition must become universal ere the planet Earth can be redeemed from the power of sin and come into accord with the cosmos. "Heaven" to any species is harmonious association with its own kind. "Birds of a feather flock together," and the same principle governs the voluntary associations of animals, men, devils, devas, angels, gods, and spirits of all degrees. When "heaven," as a state of mind, is destroyed, it is natural to seek a new situation or another association; but this is not necessary when the transmutation can be accomplished in the old

environment. The state of mind establishes the center of association. An established center, where the principle of personal responsibility is recognised and understood, is the most valuable cosmic accomplishment.

30. Subjective conditions of happiness, love, peace, serenity, ecstasy, or trance, have been the ideals of great religious attainments and considered proofs of union with the Divine. This is the greatest deception. The history of the world will be changed when men clearly discern that the practical work of establishing righteousness upon earth is the very heart of the creative purpose. Therefore, any and every degree of union with the Divine necessarily involves the assuming of personal responsibility for the success of the involutionary-evolutionary process. This responsibility has been recognised by all enlightened souls, and they have willingly delayed or abandoned the enjoyment of their hard-won victories for further service in the advancement of the Great Work.

31. The problem of creation includes the intellectual education, the moral discipline, and the spiritual regeneration of humanity. The ones first enlightened through the process inherit the responsibility, and must bear the burden and endure the pain of enlightening others. This means an enormous expansion of their time-sense, and a comprehension of the ages it has required to raise the human race to its present stage of development. One who engages in the task will soon discern the reasons why it will require centuries longer to abolish "man's inhumanity to man," and to make the race truly human instead of a transition from the animal stage. Probably the greatest test of the aspirant is to understand the need of patience, and to acquire it without losing hope, courage, and enthusiasm in the work.

THE RELIGION OF WISDOM

COROLLARIES TO DEFINITION NO. 5:

1. Sin is that attitude of soul and quality of life which refuses or neglects to assume personal responsibility for acquiring wisdom.

2. Transgression is any violation of the moral code which the individual recognises as binding or ideal.

3. Conscience is intuitive perception of personal responsibility.

4. The effect of transgression is to dull the faculties, degrade the capacities, and destroy the powers, which are necessary for the acquirement of wisdom and the effective discharge of personal responsibility.

5. Transgression after enlightenment as to its destructive effects may proceed from either sin or weakness.

6. There are degrees of transgression because there are degrees of personal responsibility, dependent upon enlightenment and self-mastery.

7. Ignorance and weakness may be excused or forgiven, but that does not alter their natures nor remit their penalties. The penalties for ignorance and weakness are less than for wilful violations, though all are alike registered within the soul.

8. There is no forgiveness for sin.

9. We are punished by our sins, not for our sins.

10. Atonement is made by forsaking sin and assuming personal responsibility.

11. Sin, ignorance, selfishness, and weakness are the causes for all the evil in the world.

12. Salvation is deliverance from sin, ignorance, selfishness, and weakness, not a fictitious escape from their consequences.

13. Religion is intellectual, moral, and spiritual preparation for the privileges and responsibilities of life in this world, including self-development and the effort to establish righteousness.

*Wisdom and Knowledge, far from being one,
Have oftentimes no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men;
Wisdom, in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge—a rude, unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which Wisdom builds—
Till smoothed, and squared, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber when it seems to enrich!
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.*

William Cowper.

THE FOURFOLD SENSORIUM OF THE EXTERNAL
AND INTERNAL RECEIVING CAPACITIES
OF THE ENTITY NECESSARY FOR THE
ACQUIREMENT OF WISDOM

BODY—Feeling, smelling, tasting, hearing, seeing

MIND—Consciousness, observation, reason, judgment,
memory

SPIRIT—Reverence, virtue, honor, kindness, patience

SOUL—Devotion to truth, obedience to law, love of right-
eousness, equilibrium, at-one-ment

Ability to acquire knowledge of facts depends primarily upon the capacity, range, and quality of the bodily senses.

Bodily sensations, conveying the meaning of objects, may be transformed into knowledge by the mental senses. Ability to acquire scientific knowledge of nature's processes, principles, and laws, depends upon the capacity, range and quality of the mental senses.

Observations and judgments, combining the intelligence and purpose of nature's processes, principles, and laws for the finer chemistry of character building, may be transformed into spiritual knowledge by the spiritual senses. Ability to acquire spiritual knowledge depends upon the capacity, range, and quality of the spiritual senses. Every genuine quality of character, in the course of its natural development, opens the door of experience to a realm known only to those like-minded.

Spiritual knowledge, transforming personal character, may be transmuted into the constituent elements of the soul, entity, or ego, by devotion to truth, obedience to law,

and love of righteousness. Ability to acquire WISDOM depends upon the capacity, range, and quality of all the senses of body, mind, spirit, and soul. Wisdom is the harmonious combination of all the qualities involved in equilibrium and at-one-ment.

The innumerable realms of truth are protected by psychic laws. Obedience to these laws and compliance with the conditions of attainment are essential before entrance can be gained to any realm. Nature is equally indifferent and inexorable at each entrance gate. No way is known to evade the necessity for acquiring the special sense needed before admittance is obtained to each degree in a perpetually ascending scale of life and truth. Each sense adequately cultivated admits to an additional and different plane of knowledge and experience. All realms exist whether people are aware of them or not. Some people are "color blind" and others do not perceive beauty. Some persons have "no ear for music" and it is just as true that others "have no sense of honor." However, nature's process of involution provides an opportunity and a method for acquiring any additional sense, provided the desire be great enough; and nature's process of evolution provides an opportunity and a method for cultivating and improving every sense.

Ability to perceive truth may be acquired. The key to this avenue of approach to Reality is appreciation of the strength and beauty of sincerity. A sincere soul naturally seeks truth. Sincerity also sets in operation another natural process for bringing truth to the individual. The very attitude of open-mindedness keeps a soul in a perceptive and receptive activity. When this attitude is maintained, the plane of attention may be changed at will. Thus, increasing ability to perceive the truth of the next higher realm may be cultivated.

Upon the ability to transmute truth into soul texture depends the acquirement of wisdom. That which differentiates good from evil in conduct rests upon the perception of truth, its acknowledgment, and conformity thereto, as distinguished from perception of truth, its denial, and the distortion thereof.

Religion is that attitude of soul and quality of life which assumes personal responsibility for the acquirement of wisdom in a constantly ascending scale.

*Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Where all that was to be, in all that was,
Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the vast
Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy light—
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
Thro' all this changing world of changeless law,
And every phase of ever-heightening life.*

*O dear Spirit, half-lost
In thine own shadow and this fleshly sign
That thou art thou—who wailest being born
And banished into mystery, and the pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world—
Live thou! and of the grain and husk, the grape
And ivy-berry, choose; and still depart
From death to death thro' life and life, and find
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who wrought
Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,
But this main-miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.*
DE PROFUNDIS, Alfred Tennyson.

THE THREE MASTER-KEYS TO THREE DEGREES
OF ATTAINMENT—A MAN, A MASTER,
AND A GOD

“Man is a measure of all things, of things that are, that they are; and of things that are not, that they are not.” Protagoras was right because the progress of human unfoldment measures the progress of the involuntary-evolutionary process of which man is the final product. Man has the privilege of surveying the planes of insensibility, immobility, plant life, animal characteristics, and human powers, and in the varied, successive accomplishments recognising the progressive purpose of the creative power. Man is the final term in the series of animal creations, though merely a crude beginning and faint replica of the gradual individualisation of intelligence, power, righteousness, and love. Men and women have attained to visions of perfect Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, Beauty, and Love which exist as ideals, or emanations from their Creator, and are far above their present attainments, and this is proof that there is a path of ascent toward divinity.

The Great Ones do not complain of hard conditions. They either overcome the adverse circumstances, or bear them patiently; thus accumulating additional power. They perceive that the only method of acquiring strength is by exercise; and the only method of acquiring self-mastery is by the discipline of desire; and the only method of acquiring virtue is by overcoming evil tendencies or possibilities; and the only way to acquire self-knowledge is to accept all the tests imposed; and the only way to develop patience is

to endure pain from which there is no escape save by ethical victory.

There is efficiency in the power, poise, and patience developed which compensates for the suffering endured. Those who perceive only the suffering, complain of hardship and injustice, and are weakened by self-pity. Those who gain the secret of effort, exercise, hardship, and overcoming, approach the severest tests with interest, anticipation, longing, and joy.

The possible transformation of character is sufficient reason for the deepest interest in life and for constant exhilaration to labour. There is a joy derived from self-realisation which surpasses any other in some respects. It is the joy of one who finds both his resources and his recompense entirely within himself, who controls his own fate, and who knows no fear. He welcomes the untried and difficult future as one greets the rising sun that gives him another opportunity to learn the full meaning of life.

The spirit within man has the inherent power of developing, through nature's established constructive principles, three degrees of individual attainment. Technical training is not required. It is not necessary to find a Master or Guru. Initiation into these degrees is derived solely from personal compliance with the psychic laws governing character transformation and protecting the truth. These degrees cannot be conferred by any sect, order, lodge, or esoteric society, but are absolutely within the power of attainment placed within the soul of man by the Creator.

"O mighty brother-soul of man
Where'er thou art, in low or high,
Thy skyey arches with exulting span
O'er-roof infinity."

These degrees of attainment are based upon acquired efficiency in the constructive work of establishing correct thought and right conduct. The three degrees of attainment,—a man, a master, and a god,—are based upon three degrees of efficiency in co-operation with the original plan of the Creator for the human race. It follows that there are degrees of at-one-ment with the Creator in the work of establishing righteousness on earth, which is “the Kingdom of God.”

*Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime,—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.*

Lowell.

*So was I lifted by my great design:
And who hath trod Olympus, from his eye
Fades not that broader outlook of the gods;
His life's low valleys overbrow earth's clouds,
And that Olympian spectre of the past
Looms towering up in sovereign memory,
Beckoning his soul from meaner heights of doom.
To have greatly dreamed precludes low ends.*

COLUMBUS, James Russell Lowell.

THE MASTER-KEY OF KNOWLEDGE, WHICH
UNLOCKS THE PRISON-DOOR OF
IGNORANCE, IS REVERENCE

The degree of the true human being, one who has mastered his animal passions, appetites, and desires, and transcended the limitations of his physical senses, is denoted by possession of the Master-Key of Knowledge, which unlocks the prison-door of ignorance, and removes the sense of being confined by Matter and the fear of being held in subjection to the animal nature. This key is Reverence.

Reverence is the initiatory perception that there are immaterial spiritual values which may be attained by effort in the right direction. This perception may awaken in various ways in different realms. No one who perceives the beautiful and who detects delightful odors can trample over a flower-garden. No one who is cognisant of the nature and value of a soul can be rough and unkind to a child. One who loves a mate must be loyal, courteous, and considerate, in order to preserve the romance of the relationship and enter into its finer possibilities. One who perceives the many realms of existence must desire to become worthy to enter the Temple of Wisdom and worship there, in fitting recognition of The Cause. Reverence is the mark of the true initiate in spiritual values.

Reverence leads to higher knowledge on all planes. Self-reverence leads to more profound self-knowledge. Reverence for one's soul becomes reverence for the Creator. Appreciation of one's own capacities and potentialities results in reverence which opens door after door in progres-

sive attainments. Reverence for truth leads a soul out beyond orthodoxies, the beliefs of the multitudes. Reverence for moral and spiritual values leads to their more perfect comprehension and thus to the transmutation of soul quality. Reverence for divine values leads to concepts of surpassing high attainments and, in the fullness of time, to knowledge of the Cause World. Inasmuch as man is an epitomised expression of the meaning and purpose of the universe, it is true to some extent that "He who knows himself, knows God."

Something may be offered in the nature of proof of this principle and the extent of knowledge attainable, but after all that can be expressed in language is said and written, it all depends upon individual apprehension and comprehension to be recognised as proof or to accomplish its intention. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." This degree of knowledge, "cosmic consciousness," can be attained only through intensive experience, dependent upon withdrawal from other pursuits and persevering application of all the powers.

Man in his fourfold being is an individualisation of cosmic elements in physical embodiment. As such he acquires a measure of cosmic intelligence, exhibits a portion of cosmic energy, discerns the degrees of his possible development, and makes the creative purpose his very own. That is to say:

1. The physical body of man is composed of the gases, liquids, and "cosmic dust" of the planet (oxygen, carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, calcium, sulphur, phosphorus, sodium, etc.), and this body is continually renewed by these chemical elements adapted for assimilation by passing through vegetable and animal forms. The patterns of mechanical de-

vices which have been tested in the animal kingdom are reproduced in his organism. The integration of a body, the processes of growth, assimilation, elimination, circulation, respiration, and reproduction are governed by diffused cosmic intelligence and not by individual comprehension. All of nature's processes are governed by intelligence which surpasses the human understanding. The occupation of pure science is to interpret this intelligence, to reproduce its meaning within an individualised comprehension.

2. The mind of man has three phases of successive development,—(1) his thought power, (2) the result obtained through right use of his thought power, or knowledge, (3) his interpretations of his relations to the creative intelligence, or his philosophies and religions. In other words, nature has produced an individualised thinker, supplied the materials for knowledge, and provided the incentives and opportunity for continuous development. Through correct thinking, or gradual apprehension and comprehension of the intelligence expressed in nature, the mind of man approaches the Truth, which is the full revelation of the creative purpose.

3. The will of man is a form of cosmic energy, a continuation of the effort of the ages, an endeavor to secure fulfilment of purpose. Through discipline of the will, which is obedience to law, man approaches an understanding of right conduct, which is doing the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven; and thereafter, with enlightened mind and intense determination, he labors to establish righteousness in all human relationships.

4. The spirit of man, through correct thinking and right conduct, gradually rises to aspirations,—for noble deeds, for fulfilling the prophecies inherent in his endow-

ment, for realising his highest possibilities, for cosmical fruition beyond the boundaries of the seen and the known. There can be no perpetual cosmos without the harmony created by reverence, obedience, virtue, honor, love, and righteousness. Until the creatures preserve these, the whole creation is in jeopardy and a partial failure.

5. And through all the onward and upward striving, through countless efforts, failures, abortions, partial successes, through all the innumerable phases of the universal process called evolution, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain until now." Thus, the planet Earth is bringing forth those who, after many days and other experiences, shall become worthy children of God. Become by knowing; know by becoming.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. THE BIBLE.

One who conquers others is powerful, but one who conquers himself is mighty. THE TAO.

If a man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors. THE DHAMMAPADA.

THE MASTER-KEY OF CONDUCT, WHICH
UNLOCKS THE PRISON-DOOR OF
WEAKNESS, IS EQUILIBRIUM

The degree of the master, one who has conquered and transmuted his own emotions, ambitions, and vanities, is denoted by possession of the Master-Key of Conduct, which unlocks the prison-door of secret weakness. This key is Equilibrium, that ability which enables one to preserve the perfect balance of the soul in the midst of conflicting elements. Equilibrium is the calm in the center of the cyclone. Equilibrium is the ability to refrain from acting until the action is perfectly controlled by the highest wisdom attainable at the time. Equilibrium makes no premature decisions, and therefore entails no regret for hasty actions.

The responsibility for self-mastery is greater than for any other use of power. A person may neglect other possible acquirements and not be brought into judgment; but the one who neglects to acquire self-mastery will inevitably be overcome by secret weakness and in the fullness of time be overwhelmed with shame.

The mastery of self surpasses in value all other mastery. Any uncontrolled desire, emotion, ambition, or vanity may cause an act which can never be forgotten or self-forgiven. The forces of one's own nature have more power to cause happiness or misery than all the powers of the outside world.

Equilibrium, when perfected, means the automatic regulation of conduct by philosophy. Intelligence and right-

eousness unite in a balanced wisdom which prevents any misuse of power and loss of opportunity, or any excess in the expenditure of energy, while steadily accomplishing the true object and purpose of life, self-realisation.

Equilibrium is an attribute of self-knowledge. Only he who clearly recognises his own limitations, potentialities, and possibilities, can acquire the sense of equilibrium which governs productive internal development in personal philosophy and its externalisation in wise conduct. Self-mastery is the ability to prevent self-seeking, or activity from motives of self-aggrandisement. Self-control is the ability to regulate the expenditure of energy by wisdom.

Equilibrium is the poise which is preparatory to self-extension in higher realms. Equilibrium is the poise which is preparatory to perception of richer values in self-development. Equilibrium is the quietness which ensues when the selfish clamor has ceased and the individual discerns his true relation to all forms of life upward striving. Then it is that the individual perceives the opportunity for perpetual growth proffered him in nature's processes of evolution, involution, dissolution and reorganisation of form. The opportunity for self-development is so involved in the progress of the Whole that enlightened egoism is now equivalent to altruism. No one can ever know himself until he has espoused and served a cause much greater than himself. There are potentialities in every normal soul which come into action only through a more powerful stimulus than any selfish interest can supply. Transcendence or self precedes perception of the creative purpose.

"Except a man be born again, he shall not see the Kingdom of God." There is an experience of attaining freedom from Matter and liberty to test the life of the Spirit, which

is equivalent to being born again or reincarnating while in the same physical body. Equilibrium is the experience of sustained poise at great heights, which are, necessarily, over great depths. The principle of equilibrium is static, a maintained balance of forces; while the principle of at-one-ment is dynamic, a liberation of regenerative powers.

The mind grappling with great aims and wrestling with mighty ingredients, grows, by certain necessity, to their stature. Scarce anything so convinces me of the capacity of the human intellect for indefinite expansion in the different stages of its being, as this power of enlarging itself to the compass of surrounding emergencies.

William Cullen Bryant.

*We see but half the causes of our deeds,
Seeking them wholly in the outer life,
And heedless of the encircling spirit-world,
Which, though unseen, is felt, and sows in us
All germs of pure and world-wide purposes.
From one stage of our being to the next
We pass unconscious o'er a slender bridge,
The momentary work of unseen hands,
Which crumbles down behind us; looking back,
We see the other shore, the gulf between,
And, marvelling how we won to where we stand,
Content ourselves to call the builder Chance.*

A GLANCE BEHIND THE CURTAIN,

James Russell Lowell.

THE MASTER-KEY OF BEING, WHICH UNLOCKS
THE PRISON-DOOR OF PAIN, IS
AT-ONE-MENT

The degree of a god, or a "Son of God," one who has been born again consciously of the Spirit, is denoted by possession of the Master-Key of Being, which unlocks the prison-door of pain in daily earth experiences. This key is at-one-ment with the Universal Intelligence, Will, Power, Plan, and Purpose. All the perplexing problems, which for ages have tormented the mind of man, yield to the wise application of this key.

No man knoweth the secret of harmony until after passing through cosmic consciousness to cosmic oneness. This attainment is the result of a profound life-experience, or the long process of ascending Wisdom's Stair from self-centered individualism to cosmic unison. It is not the result of any single experience, but the cumulative effect of thousands, all directed to this end by an awakened soul with one supreme desire. To some this desire appears as love of God, to others as love of rightness, to be right with one's self and the universe. Formulas, mantras, prayers, charms, and incantations are but a child's idle play as compared to this regenerative experience which leaves nothing of the old, but which makes all things new.

The ascent of Wisdom's Stair results in the reconciliation of all antagonisms in the ego's fourfold being, and, consequently, in the removal of all the elements which formerly caused friction, doubt, anxiety, and pain. At-one-ment within, or unification of all the desires, powers,

and purposes of one's own being, necessarily precedes at-one-ment with the Spirit of Universal Being.

At-one-ment depends primarily upon self-control. Self-control is the ability to transform will-power into intelligent, purposeful determination; or, in other words, to expend energy constructively in accordance with nature's plan. Self-control is the primary fitness for co-operation in the universal process and purpose. Masters and gods employ and direct the other forces of nature, but the prerequisite is the understanding and control of their own.

The control of all the powers of one's own nature surpasses in value all other sovereignty. Self-control is the governing principle of the ascent to self-realisation which exceeds any ambitious dream of earthly dominion. The highest degrees of self-realisation become known through gradually perfecting at-one-ment with the Universal Intelligence, Power, Plan, and Purpose. The individual is not absorbed by the process but immeasurably intensified. The heart of the universal purpose is the striving to produce personal representatives.

The individual who seeks to become a representative of the creative purpose has not undertaken a trivial accomplishment. Mere goodness is not sufficient. Courage alone will not suffice. Perseverance, though indispensable, does not qualify adequately. Intelligence needs reinforcement from other allied qualities. Wisdom must be supplemented by active powers and by positive constructive deeds in the establishment of righteousness. To think as God thinks, and to act as God would act, is the high ideal set by Jesus,—"Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." The KEY-WORD of at-one-ment is none of these,—prayer, worship, self-denial, asceticism, penance, monasticism,

celibacy, mastership, or power. The key-word of at-onement is WISDOM.

This degree of self-control, the attainment of godship within, must have been perceived by the ancient prophet when he exclaimed, "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment!" But, before honour there must be acquired inexhaustible patience with oneself and the time required; there must be tireless service to all forms of life on the upward march, and strength ample to endure the petty stings of neglect and the apparent disgrace of forced association with the ignorant who cannot understand why the greater must serve the lesser, nor appreciate any higher values than those listed as "property," by which they mean material goods and money. The soul possessions acquired by transcending earth's limitations are not "property" and, therefore, are not considered valuable by the denizens of earth caves.

The steps toward the great at-one-ment lead away from fame and fortune. The soul which is nearest at-one with God lives remotest from the crowd. Those who cannot perceive God in daily natural phenomena are permitted to ignore him. Also, one who is truly great is unappreciated because his greatness is not recognised. He who lives in high altitudes is above society. It sometimes happens that they assist the world the most who are the farthest from its notice.

The transition from the human to the divine life is marked by the shifting of control. Through self-control, the human personality endeavors to serve truth, to obey law, and to love righteousness apprehended as ideals. In the divine life, the ideals exist as reals as clearly as though objectified, personalised, and deified, and thenceforth Truth,

Law, and Righteousness control all self endeavors. Devotion, obedience, and love are commanded by the high quality of the ideals, and the individual pleases himself by making his responses thereto as perfect as possible since this is the way to at-one-ment.

Personal character is altered by transmutation, refinement, and sublimation without loss of individuality. Personal responsibility automatically increases with every added degree of insight, and the intelligent aspirant is glad to have it so. All schemes for evading personal responsibility and securing imputed righteousness are false and treacherous, and belief in them limits opportunity, destroys integrity, cripples personality, and degrades the soul. One who perceives the principle involved in the doctrine of imputed righteousness through the at-one-ment of another would not accept it even if it were true, but it is not. Every soul must make its own at-one-ment, or it is not made. There is no other way on earth or in the heavens.

BECOMING A GOD

Where is the proof that ye hold virtue equal to all other things, or indeed superior? Show me a Stoic, if ye have one. Where or how can ye? But persons that repeat the phrases of Stoicism, of these ye can show us any number. And do they repeat those of the Epicureans any worse? And are they not equally accurate in the Peripatetic? Who is, then, a Stoic? As ye say that a statue is Phidian which is wrought according to the art of Phidias, show me a man that is wrought according to the opinions he utters! Show me one that is sick and yet prosperous, in peril and prosperous, dying and prosperous, in exile and prosperous, in evil repute and prosperous. Show him to me. By the gods, fain would I see a Stoic! And have ye none that is fully wrought out; then show me at least one that is in hand to be wrought—one that even leaneth toward these things. Do me this favor; grudge not an old man a sight that I have never yet seen. Think ye that I would have you show me the Zeus of Phidias or the Athene—a work all ivory and gold? Nay; but let one show me a man's soul that longs to be like-minded with God, and to blame neither gods nor men, and not to fail in any effort or avoidance, and not to be wrathful nor envious, nor jealous, but—for why should I make rounds to say it?—that desires to become a god from a man, and in this body of ours, this corpse, is mindful of his fellowship with Zeus. Show me that man.

Epictetus.

The gods are indeed, but they not as many believe them to be. Not he is an infidel who denies the gods of the many, but he that fastens upon the gods the opinions of the many.

Epicurus.

THE STAIRWAY OF THE GODS

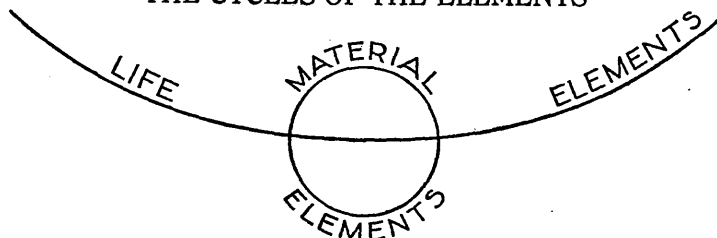
WISDOM
IS THE PERFECT HARMONIC OF
DEVOTION TO TRUTH,
OBEDIENCE TO LAW, AND
LOVE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

WISDOM
IS THE POSSESSION
OF HARMONY
WITH THE
CREATIVE PURPOSE

SELF-MASTERY
IS THE COMPLETE REPRESSION
OF DESTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES

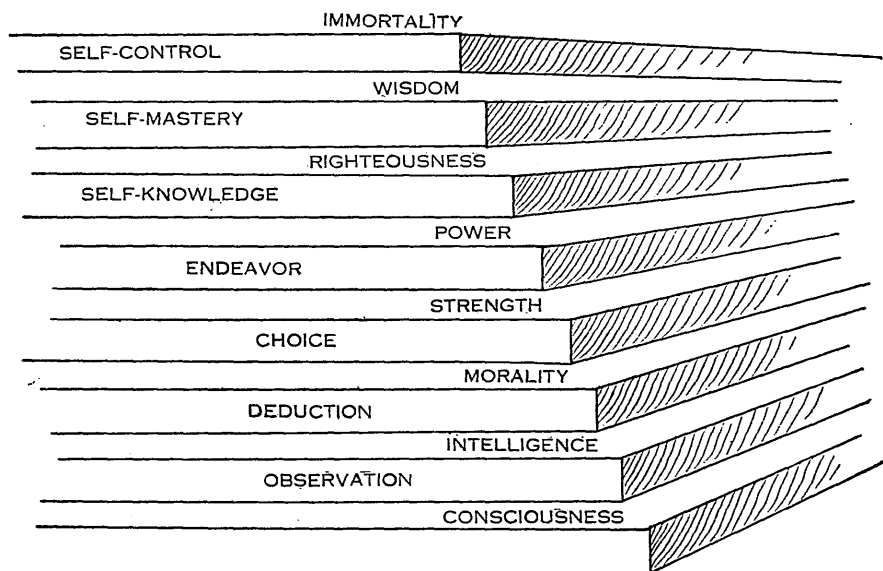
SELF-CONTROL
IS THE PERFECT LIBERATION
OF CONSTRUCTIVE ENERGY

THE CYCLES OF THE ELEMENTS



RIGHTEOUSNESS
IS THE ACTIVE PRESERVATION,
OF THE HARMONIC OF
WISDOM

IMMORTALITY
IS CONSCIOUSNESS
PERPETUATED
THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO LAW



KNOW TO BECOME— BECOME TO KNOW

THE STAIRWAY OF THE GODS

Thus is the ladder mounted. But to such as are gross or vile, the climbing is slow and tortuous. Seven steps must be mounted by the soul that aspires to immortality. First is the step of OBSERVATION. Man lives like a beast of the field until he observes himself and his environment. He pauses here in contemplation of the actual a long time. Some never leave this step but linger age upon age until the protoplasmic stuff of which they are composed resolves itself into cosmic, chemical elements, and the individual as such is lost.

Second is the step of DEDUCTION and here man classifies his observations and deduces from them a working hypothesis on which to lay the foundation of a higher life.

The third step is CHOICE. On this step of CHOICE, many turn about again and return to the step of OBSERVATION, and over and over again souls that are weak hesitate here and retrace their steps. This is properly the home of the Terror of the Threshold, for this is the open door to the two great realms of right and wrong, of morality and immorality, of truth and falsehood, of light and darkness.

The fourth step is ENDEAVOR, and whether the CHOICE STEP was taken to a life of morality or immorality, this step is the same for the individual. It is as important as was OBSERVATION, DEDUCTION, or CHOICE, for strength is developed here.

At OBSERVATION stair the mortal awakens to and develops consciousness. At DEDUCTION stair he develops intelligence. At CHOICE stair he "sets" into the mould of morality or

immorality. At ENDEAVOR stair he develops strength, or is forced to descend again into the elemental or cause world and so loses individuality. Many tarry long here but none can abide as at a stopping-place, for he is yet upon the Stairway of the Gods. Upon this step of ENDEAVOR or WILL, the individual discovers the ego and the non-ego. Here is the self fully formed, and the way of ascent is luminous from thence upward.

The remaining steps are severally SELF-KNOWLEDGE, SELF-MASTERY, and SELF-CONTROL, and when one has learned and truly comprehended his innate possibilities, his points of difference from and likeness to his fellows, his selfhood unique and his alone in all the universe, with only a correspondence, not a duplicate, in another self of differing sex, (a duplicate of him no where existent in the cosmos); when he truly has come on the step of SELF-KNOWLEDGE to a full acquaintance of his own capacities, faculties, and powers, his own appetites, passions, and desires, he finds himself a dual-imaged being, a part of his nature the gift of his Mother-Father earth, a part of his Father-Mother God, and he must of his own volition decide whether he will develop the one or the other, and the battle for supremacy occurs when he ascends to the next higher step of SELF-MASTERY.

Here are born both the black and the white magians, and none but the soul's self can decide. Again has the individual reached a crucial point in morality. If at the step of CHOICE, he elected to become strong in evil-doing, here he is in position to reverse that decision and ascend to the level of morality through SELF-MASTERY. If he, at the step of CHOICE, elected to become strong in righteousness, he need not crucify himself to take the next higher step, for

he naturally and joyously mounts the final stair of SELF-CONTROL, and is become as the Gods, knowing good from evil, strong to do and to dare.

But if at the stair of CHOICE, he elected to do deeds of darkness, growing strong in evil, he must, if he would ascend to the level of the Kingdom of God, crucify himself; and freed from the flesh on the third day,—that is, on the day in which appetite, passion, and desire for the lower gratification of the flesh lie slain,—he arises to the level of SELF-CONTROL, and enters the door of the Kingdom of God. If, on the other hand, he refuses the cross, “loving the darkness rather than the light,” he descends again into Chaos, a “lost” soul.

Thus seven be the steps and seven the virtues of the Stairway of the Gods.

GRADUATED SCALE OF CHASTITY

1. If thou dost abstract from purity the element of mutability, thou hast not purity, thou hast virtue.

2. If thou dost abstract from virtue the element of effort, thou hast not virtue, thou hast purity. Virtue is attained through knowledge and maintained through self-mastery. Neither virtue nor purity can be produced through external constraint.

3. If thou dost abstract from purity the element of knowledge, thou hast not purity, thou hast innocence.

4. If thou dost abstract from innocence the ability to acquire knowledge, thou hast not innocence, thou hast moral insensibility.

5. If thou dost abstract from virtue the element of love of innocence, thou hast not virtue, thou hast physical restraint.

6. If thou dost abstract from virtue the element of love of purity, thou hast not virtue, thou hast unmorality.

7. If thou dost abstract from virtue the element of self-mastery, thou hast not virtue, thou hast constraint.

8. If thou dost abstract from virtue all purity but sex, thou hast not virtue, thou hast abstinence from one vice.

9. If thou dost abstract from abstinence the love of sex purity, thou hast not abstinence, thou hast continence.

10. If thou dost abstract from continence the quality of righteous purpose, thou hast not continence, thou hast cessation from external gratification.

11. If thou dost, by constraint, abstract from cessation the element of opportunity, thou hast not cessation, thou hast worthlessness.

THE PASSING HOURS

When, studded with rich gems of joys
Which only the supremely blest ones know,
The hours did swiftly slip into the shining sea,
And naught did stay save memory of its radiance,
I said,—“This shining sea of joyous hours
Dost prove that I am chosen of the Gods,
And life for me is naught but bliss.”

Then, marred by shocks of earth's severest pains,
Each gem was flawed, its beauty passed away,
And hours of vain regret did drag and cling
As though a moment's respite ne'er would come to me;
I said,—“This darksome flood of horrid hours
Dost prove that I am cursed by demons
And life for me is naught but pain.”

A voice I heard: “I am Angel of the Hours.
Ye do sow and reap as do all other men;
Ye pursue the phantom which the hour suggests
Without regard to order, love, or law.
My only task it is to see ye know the worst,
And that ye pass not to the other world
Without the power gained from Choice

“The power to choose, once gained, ne’er lost,
Shall make ye of the line of Gods.

To know the evil is to dread its pains;

To know the good to love its joys so well,
That shining hours do draw with power divine,
And horrid hours repel with might so great
That Choice is product of these twain.

“If, while life shall last, ye know the best and worst,
And choose the right through power combined of love and
dread,

What more could incarnation bring ye?”

THE MASTERY OF THE HOURS

Afloat on a meaningless sea of time

A human barque there chanced to be,
Which had no course or destination.

The Master had no purpose, knew no plan;
He felt no need of compass or of chart;
No helmsman steered, no port was sought;
The hours were spent in idly drifting.

A wind arose, blew strong and long;

The barque was driven near a coast.

"This sea's not all;" the Master mused,

"I never dreamed this ocean had a shore,
Perchance with ports I'd like to see;
This shore's not all, and other lands
May well repay my visit."

More ships were seen and Masters met;

He asked for information. A port was sought,
And charts obtained revealing new location.

The use of compass then was learned,
The way to lay a course and steer to port;
With mastery gained of wind and wave,
His purpose formed for exploration.

"How short the time!" the Master said,
"How many ports there be! To see them all
While life shall last, my course must now be planned."
His will grew tense, his mind informed,
Each land increased his inspiration,
For sailing round the world assists to give
Awareness of its meaning.

The sea of time divided into years,
And every year a valued part of life
When mind awakened to its passing.
Each hour now found a problem vast,
As will and thought the Master used,
Discovering all the valued ports
And reflecting on their meaning.

That navigation is an art;
That destination's reached through steering;
That drifting will not reach life's goals;
The Master learned through sailing.
He pondered long on all he saw;
Before the port of Death was reached,
His soul asked, "What's beyond it?"

The booklet issued as *The Religion of Wisdom* is the first chapter of a treatise to be published in the future, entitled

NEW READING OF RELIGION

A STUDY-PLAN

OF THE ESSENTIALS OF TRUE RELIGION
AND CRITICISM OF THE
EVASIONS OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
WHICH ARE SANCTIONED BY THE DOCTRINES
OF THE GREAT WORLD—RELIGIONS

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